

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-13 AID-20

DRC-01 OMB-01 /124 W

----- 037909

R 071940Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3518

INFO USCINCSO

DIA DOD WASHDC

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USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, AR

SUBJECT: REACTION TO ERP ATTACK ON ARMY HEALTH HQ

REF: BA-6574

1. SUMMARY: REACTION OF GENERAL PUBLIC TO YESTERDAY'S ERP VIOLENCE IS ONE OF DISGUST. PERONISTS ESPECIALLY RESENTED THE ERP ATTEMPT; ITS EFFECT HAS BEEN TO DRIVE DEEPER WEDGE BETWEEN PERONISTS AND EXTREMISTS. ALSO SIGNIFICANT TO NOTE HOW QUICKLY ARMY WAS CALLED IN TO SUPPRESS TERRORISTS. FACT THAT THEY DID SO VERY EFFECTIVELY IS BLOW TO LATTER, ESPECIALLY IN PSYCHOLOGICAL SENSE, AS IT DISRUPTS IMAGE DERIVED FROM LONG STRING OF TERRORIST SUCCESSES. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER A MEETING LAST NIGHT WITH PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT LASTIRI AND DEFENSE MINISTER ROBLEDO CONCERNING THE ERP ATTACK, PERON BRANDED THE EVENT A COMMON CRIME. ANYONE WHO ACTED OUTSIDE THE LAW WOULD BE DEALT WITH BY POLICE, PERON DECLARED. PRESIDENT LASTIRI ALSO REFERRED SCATHINGLY TO THE ATTACKERS AS COMMON CRIMINALS. HE ATTENDED WAKE FOR LT COL DUARTE LAST NIGHT AND

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EXTENDED HIS CONDOLENCES TO FAMILY. FUNERAL SERVICES HELD TODAY

FOR DUARTE WERE TREATED BY GOVT AND MEDIA AS THOSE FOR A NATIONAL HERO. SERVICES WERE TELEVISED AND HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS OF GOVT AND ARMED FORCES ATTENDED. GENERAL ANAYA, COMMANDER, I CORPS, AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE ROBLEDO WERE AMONG THOSE WHO DELIVERED ORATIONS AT FUNERAL. ROBLEDO'S HARD-HITTING SPEECH CASTIGATED TERRORISTS AS ENEMIES OF THE ARGENTINE PEOPLE AND OF ALL HUMANITY, PLEDGED THAT THEIR ACTIONS WOULD NOT BE TOLERATED BY THE GOVT AND WOULD BE REPRESSED WITH ALL RESOURCES AVAILABLE, AND EXPRESSED THE COMPLETE SOLIDARITY OF THE GOVT WITH THE ARMED FORCES.

3. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT ONE RESULT OF YESTERDAY'S ATTACK WAS TO DRIVE THE WEDGE DEEPER BETWEEN THE PERONISTS AND THE EXTREMIST GROUPS. PRO-PERONIST DAILY MAYORIA THIS MORNING RUNS HEADLINE INDICATING PERONIST MOVEMENT UNANIMOUSLY REPUDIATES THE EXTREMIST ATTEMPT. MOST PERONISTS SEEM TO REGARD THE ATTEMPT AS AN AFFRONT TO PERON AND AS AN EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE EXTREMISTS TO FRUSTRATE THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS. THE JUSTICIALIST MOVEMENT YESTERDAY ISSUED A STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE ATTACK AND WARNING: "THEY (THE GUERRILLAS) ARE A MINORITY AND WILL NEVER SUCCEED IN IMPOSING THEIR SPURIOUS IDEOLOGY. WE DEFEATED THEM AT THE POLLS AND IF NECESSARY WE WILL MEET THEM WITH THE SAME VIRILITY ARGENTINES HAVE ALWAYS DISPLAYED IN DRIVING OUT INVADERS."

4. IN CONTRAST TO EARLIER DISCUSSIONS, THERE WAS NO DEBATE YESTERDAY AS TO THE ARMY'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH THE TERRORISTS. THE ARMY WAS CALLED IN QUICKLY. EVEN THOUGH FACT THAT IT WAS MILITARY INSTALLATION STIMULATED DECISION, THIS IS PROBABLY THE PORTENT OF THINGS TO COME. TERRORISTS MUST HENCEFORTH AT LEAST ASSUME THEY WILL FACE ARMED FORCES AS WELL AS POLICE.

5. THE IMMEDIATE TACTICAL OBJECTIVE OF THE ATTACK SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN TO OBTAIN MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND THE 170 LIGHT AUTOMATIC RIFLES AND 40,000 ROUNDS OF AMMUNITION THAT WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN IN THE BUILDING. NEWSPAPER REPORTS INDICATE THAT 4 OF THE ATTACKERS WERE ERP MEMBERS WHO HAD BEEN RELEASED BY THE CAMPORA GOVT ON MAY 25.

6. IMPORTANTLY, THE ATTACK FAILED, OR, MORE ACCURATELY, WAS CRUSHED. THIS MARKS FIRST MAJOR REVERSE FOR THE TERRORISTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AFTER A WHOLE STRING OF SUCCESSES, FROM THE RAWSON PRISON BREAK LAST AUGUST TO RECENT HEADLINE-GRABBING KIDNAPPINGS. PICTURES IN THE MORNING PAPERS OF SOME ELEVEN TERRORISTS SPRAWLED FACE DOWN ON THE SIDEWALK UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF SOLDIERS AND POLICE MAY GIVE HEART TO THE SECURITY FORCES AND TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. IN SUM, ATTACK RESULTED IN NET LOSS AND FURTHER ISO-LATION OF ERP.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: willialc
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BUENOS06609
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730949/aaaabkfu.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: BA-6574
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: willialc
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22-Oct-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <31-Oct-2001 by willialc>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REACTION TO ERP ATTACK ON ARMY HEALTH HQ
TAGS: PINT, PINS, AR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005